
System of Government

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LBANIA is a democratic, constitutional, hereditary monarchy, ruled by a king of the ancient dynasty of the Zogus of Mati, which family was interrelated by marriage in the fifteenth century with Scanderbeg the Great, Albania's national hero-king.

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According to the Constitution, the monarchy is hereditary in the male line in the Zogu dynasty. In case of the absence of a direct heir, the ruling king designates, with the approval of Parliament, his own successor from the male line of his family.

The king names the Prime Minister and the cabinet.

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Parliament is composed of a House of Representatives, deputies to which are elected by free, equal, universal and direct suffrage of all male citizens. One deputy for every 15,000 population is elected for the term of four years. Parliament consists now of 56¹ deputies.

Any citizen of 30 years of age and over,

¹[Errata: should be 58. ⁷⁶ Cf. Errata sheet, p. 269, Cat. 116--Analysis]

ALBANIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

- 646 who is in full possession of all his citizenship rights and can read and write the Albanian language, may be elected as a deputy.
- 641 All citizens are equal before the law and their citizenship and political rights secured.
- 425 Confiscation of property is definitely abolished.
- 659 The State recognizes no official religion, all religions are equal and have full rights and receive equally favorable treatment in every respect.
- 641 Foreigners enjoy equal rights with Albanian citizens, except they cannot vote nor hold parliamentary and certain other offices.
- 645 The official business of the State is carried on by the eight Ministries, namely: Ministry of Interior Affairs (Ministria e Punëve të Brëndëshme), Ministry of Justice (Ministria e Drejtësisë), Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme), Ministry of Public Instructions (Ministria e Arësimit), Ministry of Finance (Ministria e Financave), Ministry of National Economy (Ministria e Ekonomisë Kombëtare), Ministry of Public Works (Ministria e Punëve Botore), and Ministry of National Defense (Ministria Komanda e Përgjithshme e Mbrojtjes Kombëtare).

[Constitution]

ARTICLE 32

641 Defense of the country is the highest duty and greatest privilege of any citizen.

[687] Treachery against the people is the greatest crime.
Military service is obligatory for all citizens.

ARTICLE 33

651 Every citizen must pay taxes according to his income.
The state fixes taxes, and exemption from the same is determined by law.

ARTICLE 34

687 Citizens cannot use the rights given them by this constitution in order to change the constitutional regime of the People's Republic of Albania in an undemocratic manner. Any act of this kind is illegal and carries with it punishment as prescribed by law.

ARTICLE 35

563 In the People's Republic of Albania national minorities enjoy all the rights enjoyed by other citizens as well as freedom to use their own language and develop their own culture.

ARTICLE 36

641 The People's Republic of Albania gives the right of refuge to citizens of other countries who are persecuted for their activities in behalf of democracy, national liberation, rights of the workers, or scientific and cultural freedom.

PART TWO STATE ORGANIZATIONS

TITLE I

Highest Organs of the State

(a) People's Convention

ARTICLE 37

646 The People's Convention (Parliament) is the highest organ of the state of the People's Republic of Albania.

ARTICLE 38

The People's Convention maintains the sovereignty of the

[Constitution]

nation and state, and exercises all the sovereign rights under the constitution with the exception of those rights which the constitution itself has assigned to the Presidium of the People's Convention or to the government. 646

ARTICLE 39

Legislative powers are exercised only by the People's Convention.

ARTICLE 40

The People's Convention is elected by all the citizens, with one representative for every 20,000 people. [666]

ARTICLE 41

The People's Convention is elected for four years.

ARTICLE 42

At the beginning of each session the People's Convention elects a president, vice-president and secretary. The president presides over the meetings according to the rules of procedure.

ARTICLE 43

The People's Convention is called by a decree of the Presidium in ordinary and extraordinary sessions. [643]

Ordinary sessions meet twice annually, March 15 and October 15. If the People's Convention is not called on these two dates, it will meet on its own initiative and without a decree of the Presidium.

Extraordinary sessions of the People's Convention are called when the Presidium deems it necessary or when one-third of the members request its convocation.

ARTICLE 44

The People's Convention makes its own rules of procedure.

ARTICLE 45

No bill can become a law until it is passed by the relative majority in a session when the majority of its members take part.

[Constitution]

ARTICLE 46

646 Laws become effective fifteen days after they are promulgated in the official Journal, except when it is designated otherwise in the law itself.

ARTICLE 47

The People's Convention appoints various committees for specific purposes.

The People's Convention appoints a committee to examine the credentials of the people's representatives in its first session.

Upon recommendation of this committee the People's convention approves or rejects the credentials of the people's representatives.

ARTICLE 48

The People's Convention may investigate matters of general interest through special committees.

All organs of the state must give facts and information when these committees demand it.

ARTICLE 49

All members of the People's Convention enjoy parliamentary immunity.

Members of the People's Convention and of the Presidium cannot be arrested or prosecuted without the approval of the People's Convention, except in case of *flagrante delicto*.

ARTICLE 50

In case of war or similar emergency the People's Convention may convene longer than its normal term so long as the emergency exists.

The People's Convention may also shorten its term.

ARTICLE 51

[666] The date for new parliamentary election must be fixed before the convention dissolves.

The interval between the day of dissolution of the People's Convention and the day of the new elections must not exceed three months nor be less than two months.

[Constitution]

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9. It appoints and recalls envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary to foreign countries upon recommendation of the Government.
10. It accepts credentials and letters of recall from foreign diplomats.
11. It proclaims general mobilization and declares war in case of armed aggression against the People's Republic of Albania between the two sessions of the People's Convention; in case of urgent necessity it fulfills international obligations of the Republic to the international peace organizations or allied nations.
12. It appoints and dismisses ministers between the two sessions of the People's Convention upon recommendation of the Prime Minister.
13. It appoints assistant ministers upon recommendation of the Prime Minister.
14. It creates commissions within the government and designates their chairmen upon recommendation of the Prime Minister.
15. It assigns duties to a ministry or to a government commission.
16. On the basis of decisions made by the People's Convention or upon recommendation of the government, it submits various questions to a popular referendum.

The decrees of the Presidium of the People's Convention are signed by the president and by the secretary.

ARTICLE 55

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The Presidium of the People's Convention is responsible for its activities to the People's Convention. The Convention may revoke its Presidium and replace it by another; it may dismiss some members and replace them by others before their term expires.

ARTICLE 56

When the People's Convention is dissolved, the Presidium

[Constitution]

continues in power until another People's Convention elects a new Presidium. 646

The Presidium convokes the People's Convention within one month after its election. 643

TITLE II

Administrative Organs of the State

ARTICLE 57

The Government is the highest executive and administrative organ of the People's Republic of Albania. 645

The government is appointed and dismissed by the People's Convention.

The government is responsible to the People's Convention and must account to it for its activities. Between the two sessions of the People's Convention the government is responsible to the Presidium of the Convention before which it must render full account of its activities.

ARTICLE 58

The government performs its duties according to the constitution and the laws. The government issues the decrees necessary for carrying out laws on the basis of a special authorization; it gives binding instructions for the execution of laws.

Orders, decrees, instructions, and decisions of the government must be signed by the Prime Minister and the minister in charge of the department concerned.

ARTICLE 59

The government directs and coordinates the functioning of the ministries, committees, and all other institutions which come under its jurisdiction.

The government outlines the economic plan of the state, submits the annual budget to the People's Convention for its approval, and supervises its execution; directs the credit and monetary systems; takes all necessary measures to uphold the constitution and the rights of all citizens; directs all military forces; keeps in touch with foreign governments; carries out treaties with foreign countries and other international obligations.

[Constitution]

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695 Any citizen who does not know Albanian may use his own language through an interpreter.

ARTICLE 81

692 The Supreme Court is elected for four years by the People's Convention of the Republic and by secret ballot.

The courts of the prefectures are elected for three years by the people's councils of the prefecture and by secret ballot.

[666] The judges of the subprefectures are also elected for three years by the people's councils of the subprefecture and by secret ballot.

A person may be elected judge many times.

The manner of election to all courts will be defined by law.

ARTICLE 82

The Supreme Court is the highest judicial body of the People's Republic of Albania.

[698] The Supreme Court can arbitrate any conflict of jurisdiction between the civil and military courts as well as between courts and any other bodies.

Cases in which the Supreme Court acts as a court of original or secondary jurisdiction will be defined by law.

ARTICLE 83

The Supreme Court passes on the legality of all court decisions of the Republic.

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[692] Only the District Attorney may exercise an appeal against a summary decision of the courts. The decision given on such an appeal has no effect on the cause tried except when the law provides otherwise.

(b) *Department of the Attorney General*

ARTICLE 84

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646 The Department of the Attorney General is the organ of the People's Convention which supervises the execution of the law by the ministries and other administrative bodies as well as by all public officials and citizens.

ARTICLE 85

The Attorney General of the People's Republic of Albania

[Constitution]

and his assistants are appointed by the People's Convention. 693

District attorneys of the prefectures and subprefectures are appointed by the Attorney General. [646]

ARTICLE 86

All district attorneys are independent of the local governmental units and are responsible only to the Attorney General, from whom they receive orders and instructions.

ARTICLE 87

District attorneys are authorized to initiate penal actions and also to exercise the right of appeal as well as the right to intervene during a judicial or administrative trial. District attorneys can exercise the right of appeal against summary decisions of the courts and other administrative organs when such decisions are illegal. [692]

ARTICLE 88

The district attorney of the military courts of the national army of the People's Republic of Albania and other military attorneys are appointed by the Commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Republic. [701]

TITLE V

*Relation Between the Executive and
Administrative Departments*

ARTICLE 89

The Presidium of the People's Convention may annul or suspend decrees, instructions, and decisions of the government when they are unconstitutional and illegal. 642

The government may annul or suspend decrees, ordinances, instructions and decisions of ministers when they are contrary to the laws, decrees, instructions and decisions of the government.

ARTICLE 90

The Presidium of the People's Convention and the higher people's councils may suspend any illegal or irregular act of the lower people's councils. 643 631

while he had gone to the ambush by another's instructions he had walked there on his own legs. As the instigator of the crime had broken his promise about paying the blood money, they sentenced him to have his house burned down by the tribe. 628
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On one occasion Lek Dukagjini had come at Skanderbeg's invitation to discuss some blood feuds at a General Assembly of all the tribes in the land. Skanderbeg opposed the principle of 'a life for a life' on the grounds that all men were *not* equal; the blood of a physically fine man was different from that of a poor type. At Lek's suggestion, however, he inquired of his mother, upon oath, what sort of a man his father had been. On learning that he had been a poor type, Skanderbeg at the next Assembly agreed to the principle of equality! 849
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About 1870, when Kolë Prenga the Great was Captain of Mirditë, a jar of butter was stolen from the church house in Orosh during the priest's absence. On his return his servant, who had also been away at the time, informed him of the theft. The priest, a Franciscan, informed the bajraktar of Orosh. The latter convened the tribe (*bajrak*) but no one confessed to the theft. The bajraktar then informed Captain Kola. The captain undertook to track down the culprit, and one day ordered the tribe to assemble on the open space in front of the church at Orosh. In spite of Captain Kola's questions no one came forward to confess to the crime. Then Captain Kola, together with the chiefs of the tribe, sentenced the unknown thief to death and banishment from the tribe; his house, too, was to be destroyed and his land left uncultivated. Not long afterwards the thieves were discovered. They were two young men of Orosh, Prengë Kolë Marku and another whose name has been forgotten. Captain Kolë Prenga the Great again ordered the tribe to assemble, one man from every house, at the church at Orosh. The two young men also came by order to the meeting. Captain Kola read out the sentence that had previously been pronounced. The two thieves were stood in the middle of an open space, unarmed and with their hands folded at the waist. The tribe stood up awaiting the captain's order to fire. But the priest, filled with pity for the culprits, begged the captain, the chiefs and the commoners to grant them their lives. This was done, they paid money to the church for their sacrilege, returned twice the quantity of what they had stolen, paid the usual fine and were expelled from the tribe. 688
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To the Land of the Eagle

○○○the man's veracity and set him down in my own mind as one of the confirmed political grumblers to be found in every country of the globe. That the gendarmes had been to the town and confiscated the weapons was probable, since the new law against the carrying of arms—a very necessary regulation in a country in which the blood feud and the vendetta still flourish—had to be enforced. It is possible, too, that without the knowledge of the authorities, individual gendarmes may have favoured certain of their co-religionists, for there is a good deal of religious intolerance in Albania even yet. The Albanian parliament, however, is not, as one might expect, divided into two antagonistic parties, Christian and Mohammedan, and I was assured by various informants that within the Chamber religious differences are dropped, and that the deputies, whether Mohammedan or Christian, have one united aim—the good of their country.

[646] It is a far cry from politics to a hairy woman, but I hope the discursiveness of a book of travel makes the sudden change of subject permissible. Attracted by a crowd at the entrance to a booth in the main street of Permeti I approached, curious to know what might be going on. Folk were passing in and out, and I assumed that it was an entertainment of some kind. Here was an opportunity of seeing for myself the local substitute for picture-palace or music-hall. I paid a small coin and entered. Within was a large room empty save for a few wooden benches and a small stand or stage covered with drapery. Some gaping yokels sat on the benches staring at the stage in furtive silence. People